LABOUR MONTHLY

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Labour Discussion Forum

July, 1957

One shilling and sixpence

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MAMMOTH v. MAN

PRESS MONOPOLY has been busy giving Britain further lessons in the meaning of freedom since we described last February the 'unstable giants' of Fleet Street. Pinched between falling advertisement revenue and rising costs, especially of newsprint—itself highly monopolised—there is, it seems, little future for any giant standing lower than the 2,000,000 mark. Hence despite brave words the tottering of the House of Liberalism's *News Chronicle* (1,400,000), built on cocoa, and its dimming *Evening Star*. Hence the earth tremors of the *Daily Herald* (1,650,000). The fall of these two would reduce Fleet Street's national daily newspapers to six—half the number of forty years ago: two 'quality' papers, *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph;* Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* and *Daily Sketch;* Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* (4,000,000); and the mammoth tabloid *Daily Mirror* (4,750,000). Standing outside Fleet Street and alone independent of monopoly: the *Daily Worker.* Such impending crashes were something 'which some of the most powerful of the newspaper combines would by no means deplore, as a means of crippling their less prosperous competitors and opening the way to additional circulation for themselves', as Francis Williams remarked in his recent book. But there are plenty of mourners ready to hand, even besides journalists. Heads are shaken gravely over the threat to an abstraction called 'the Freedom of the Press', without which Britain would cease to stand where she does. Solutions are sought in raising the price to 3d., in Government control of newsprint, in new processes. Faith in trust-busting legislation revives. Bi-partisan lecturers proclaim 'the function of a Free Press', cherished bulwark of the Western Way of Life. Yet none of these tells the blunt truth: these ugly features of the growth of press monopoly show you the face of monopoly capitalism itself. This is the portrait of capitalism today—ugly, contradictory and dangerous. It is dictatorship, the sworn enemy of democracy. If you don't like what you are looking at, then you don't like capitalist enterprise itself. The same trends of monopoly capitalism are to be found in every industry; but the press monopoly and some of its consequences are impossible to hide, so it is an informative study. Yet there is more to press ownership than monopoly profits. For here both the product itself and the profits have an importance for the monopolists. As Lord Beaverbrook frankly told the Royal Commission on the Press ten years ago: 'I run my paper purely for the purpose of making propaganda and with no other motive'. (The noble Lord was exaggerating a little the purity of his purpose; he has found his papers not without profit, so far.) For when the modern capitalist class reached monopoly stage fifty years ago, the 'freedom of the press' took on a new meaning. This, to quote, *Labour Monthly's* evidence to that same Commission, was 'the freedom of

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Notes of the Month

Labour Policy Battle

'The time has come when both the trade union movement and the political movement should get together and take the argument out of the House of Commons into the streets.

'It is too serious now and has gone beyond the point where we can wait in an orthodox way for another General Election. We ought to insist on an election now.'

ANEURIN BEVAN, M.P., speech to Annual Conference of Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, June 13, 1957.

THE present political situation in Britain is comparable in some respects to the late thirties under Neville Chamberlain. Then also a diehard Tory Government was pursuing a policy of blind anti-Soviet hostility abroad and social reaction at home, the outcome of which was to bring Britain to the edge of disaster and destruction. Then also every positive urgent Soviet proposal for

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peace was met with the same dismal platitudinous negatives. Then also the Government was arousing the mounting anger and opposition of wide sections of the people, alike on the home front, and in respect of its criminal foreign policy. There is no doubt that, had a united campaign been launched with the full strength of the labour movement during those critical years to mobilise and rally all sections of the mounting opposition of the people against the Chamberlain Government, then that Chamberlain Government could have been brought down. The collective front against fascism, which the Soviet Union was ceaselessly urging, could have been established in time. There would have been no second world war. The call for such a united campaign was sounded equally by the Communist Party and by the active left membership of the Labour Party (some of the best known leaders of the Labour Party suffering expulsion for their pains). But the dominant leadership in Transport House preferred the rôle of passivity; to wish godspeed to Chamberlain on his way to Munich; and to observe complacently the signs of mounting popular opposition as a favourable indicator for the next general election, not as a call to action. We know the outcome. We must not tread that deadly path again.

Can We Wait?

Once again a discredited diehard Tory Government, now under Macmillan, is confronted with the rising opposition of the people, alike on the home front, and in respect of foreign policy. Macmillan's dismal platitudinous negative replies to every Soviet proposal for peace (H-bombs, tests, disarmament, Middle East, Europe) are worthy of Chamberlain. This time the stakes are higher. The policy of the H-bomb, of nuclear strategy, of the division of the world into two opposing armed camps, could mean in its outcome, not merely deadly peril for Britain, but the literal destruction of Britain. Tory discredit, over Suez, over the Rent Act, over the H-bomb, has spread among extending sections, not only among the organised workers, but among middle class sections, among former Tory voters. Every by-election and every newspaper poll has demonstrated that the Macmillan Government has not the support of the majority of the electorate. It is universally recognised that a general election tomorrow would be likely to see a sweeping Labour victory. For this very reason the Macmillan Government is determined to hang on for the further length of its term, unless it is swept aside by popular pressure.

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How Long?

The crux of the present political situation in Britain is not whether Toryism could be defeated in a general election. The crux of the present political situation in Britain turns on whether this majority will of the nation can be mobilised to be made effective now in time, before the policy of the Macmillan Government works further irreparable harm in the present swift current of events at home and abroad. Whatever differences of view may exist with Mr. Bevan on this or that particular issue, there is no doubt that he hit the nail on the head when he called for a united campaign of 'the trade union movement and the political movement' to 'get together and take the argument out of the House of Commons into the streets' in order to bring down the Macmillan Government. This demand, which was voiced by the Communist Party at its Twenty-fourth Congress last year and at its Twenty-fifth Congress this year, is now winning support among all the most serious active sections of the labour movement.

What is Labour's Alternative Policy?

But a united campaign demands a united programme. This second question is inseparably bound up with the first. What is Labour's alternative policy? What will be the policy of a new Labour Government? Recent by-elections have shown that the sweep away from Toryism has not been accompanied by as decisive an advance of Labour. In some cases the slashing of Tory majorities has masked the fact that a heavy decrease in the Tory vote has been accompanied by a lesser decrease in the Labour vote. The most recent Gallup poll has registered a perceptible drop in the Labour lead over Toryism from $11\frac{1}{2}$ points or $51\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. against 40 in March of this year to $8\frac{1}{2}$ points or 50 per cent. against $41\frac{1}{2}$ in May. Those are warning lights. No political tide is automatic. The swelling discontent with Tory reaction has still to be rallied and won for enthusiasm for a positive alternative programme.

The Great Void

Here we come to the heart of the present problem of the political labour movement. It is true that the Labour Party Executive has been indefatigable in unloosing an avalanche of policy documents and in streamlining the organisation of the electoral machine. The most recent policy statements include proposals for major important reform measures especially on housing and on pensions, which,

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whatever the serious criticism on particular negative aspects, constitute materials for a positive and concrete alternative electoral programme, and a basis for legislative action by a new Government. The key statements on the ownership and control of industry are due for publication in the immediate future, and may be published by the time these lines appear. But on the great public political issues of the day where does Labour stand? Is there the same clarity of presentation of an alternative policy? Is bi-partisanship ended?

Silence and Confusion

Does the Labour Party fight Toryism on the cold war and peaceful co-existence? On Nato and the partition of Europe (Lloyd's 'Grand Design')? On nuclear strategy and the American bombers in Britain? On colonial wars? On wage restraint and the strike movement? On all the problems of Britain's changed position in the world? We cannot but recall the enforced somersault of Gaitskell on Suez. The second enforced somersault on the H-bomb. The conflict of voices on the Eisenhower Doctrine, with Gaitskell and Bevan simultaneously proclaiming opposite viewpoints. The passivity in the great engineers' strike. And on socialism, once believed by many to be the aim and basis of the Labour Party, the conflict of voices reaches the pitch of anarchy, from the direct glorification of the great trusts and monopolies (Shawcross and Stokes), through the official pæans to the mixed economy with 'a still predominantly private enterprise economy' for 'a very long time' as the future vision (Gaitskell), to the continued demands of the rank and file and many voices for public ownership and nationalisation of the means of production. Is it surprising that with this conflict of voices the electorate is confused? Or that a situation is reached when highly placed leaders feel called upon to denounce the 'appalling apathy' of the rank and file because the premier organised social-democratic labour movement of six million members proves incapable of maintaining a single daily newspaper?

Coming Labour Conference

Within three months the next Labour Party Conference will open. It may prove the last conference before a general election. It is certainly likely to prove the key conference for determining the major lines of policy in the present period, alike in respect of war

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and peace, and in respect of the aims of socialism and the future of industry. During these three months the greatest responsibility rests on all the affiliated organisations and membership, equally the trade unions and constituency organisations, to discuss every question of policy in order to make their wishes felt at the conference.

Pre-Conference Discussion

It is true that there are not the same facilities for the majority of the membership to discuss and determine official policy in the Labour Party, to the same extent as in a fully democratic organisation like the Communist Party. There is no question here of the local organisations of the rank and file membership directly electing all the delegates, who are then sovereign in national conference to determine policy, elect the leadership of their choice and issue binding instructions, as in the democratic procedure of the Communist Party. If a similar procedure obtained in the Labour Party, there would be a very different situation in respect of Labour Party leadership and policy. The decisions of the conference are not binding on the Executive, nor on the parliamentary party or a future Government. There is no organised public pre-conference discussion by the membership; and in many of the unions, casting the majority of the votes, there is little provision, or in some cases even no provision for the bulk of the membership to discuss and register their opinions on the cardinal political questions on which the votes will be cast in their name at the conference.

Extending the Discussion

Nevertheless, the conference is an important sounding board for opinion, and its proceedings can influence official policy. Every opportunity needs therefore to be taken for the widest preliminary discussion of the political issues, even though the material means for public discussion are limited, apart from those speeches of leaders which are broadcast or widely publicised in the general press. If the *Daily Herald* must be regarded as in the main lost to the movement, this emphasises the importance of the rôle of the *Daily Worker*, alongside the possibilities of expression through such organs as *Reynolds News* and *Tribune*. Incidentally, it may also be that here the proliferation of little journals, often with considerable space, which have been recently launched by the handful of individuals who under the stress of recent events have temporarily moved over from communism to a social-democratic viewpoint

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might descend for a moment from their philosophical lucubrations to give some practical help to the Labour Party by discussion of the issues before the Labour Party Conference. Over its close on four decades of existence *Labour Monthly* has consistently sought to provide within its limited means facilities for discussion by Labour Party members of problems of policy, and will continue to welcome such discussion in the present critical phase.

Preliminary Rumbles

The first blasts of controversial discussion have already sounded. Sir Hartley Shawcross, M.P., with his long experience as an advocate for the employers in the courts, and now installed in the heart of the financial oligarchy as a Director of Fords and legal consultant of Royal Dutch-Shell, has warned against any attempt to take over the great profit-making capitalist monopolies like Imperial Chemical Industries which are 'doing really well'. Quite an under-statement. I.C.I. has just published its annual report showing a trading profit last year of £53½ million, or more than a pound a head for every man, woman and child in Britain. Mr. Stokes, M.P., the great industrialist at the head of Ransome and Rapiers, has come out with a similar warning to safeguard such mammoth monopolies as I.C.I. and Portland Cement. At the same time Sir Hartley has made clear that 'I believe as strongly now in the ideals of the Labour Party as I did when I joined the party'. The 'ideals' of the Labour Party must clearly in this view not be confused with socialism or the social ownership of the means of production. We are here in the presence of the 'idealist', 'ethical' or 'moral' conception of socialism now fashionable in all official reformist labour circles, which condemns the sordid 'economic' view of socialism in terms of the social ownership of the means of production as equivalent to 'totalitarian slavery', and finds the higher 'ethical ideal' of socialism quite compatible with maintenance of the great finance-capitalist trusts.

Preliminary Counterblasts

Against these declarations a number of other leading members have expressed emphatic criticism. Tom Driberg of the Labour Party Executive declared at the Foundry Workers' Conference on May 28:

> There must and will be substantial further transfers to public ownership when the next Labour Government is in office. . . . If we don't make

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such advances we might as well chuck the whole thing up and admit that the Labour Party is not a socialist party at all but a mere ginger group for making capitalism work more efficiently and humanely.

Barbara Castle, also of the Labour Party Executive, sharply castigated Shawcross and Stokes at the South Wales Miners' gala as

disqualified from pronouncing on socialist plans. By profession they are on the other side of the negotiating table.

Emanuel Shinwell warned that any departure from the principle of public ownership would cause 'a serious split in the party far worse than anything that has happened before'. And Aneurin Bevan affirmed at the Woodworkers' Conference on June 13:

A number of our friends in the labour movement are making speeches which are directly opposed to our policy and our programmes, and which are in direct contradiction to what we believe to be our fundamental ideals.

Thus Sir Hartley Shawcross swears his fidelity to the 'ideals' of the Labour Party at the same time as Mr. Bevan, in an unmistakable reference to Sir Hartley, proclaims him to be in 'direct contradiction' to the 'fundamental ideals' of the Labour Party. Between two ethical 'rights', as old Hegel used to say, who shall judge if absolute morality is to be our guide? It is evident that the 'ideals' of the Labour Party are capable of interpretation in more than one direction, and that we are in the end compelled to come back to the sordid 'economic' 'materialist' methods of Marxism, if we are to have any register of measurement to distinguish objective reality from subjective claims.

Scapegoats

It would be naïve to assume, however, that Messrs. Shawcross and Stokes are the representatives of a tiny isolated right wing minority battling against the current of an official Labour Party leadership and policy speeding full steam ahead to the fulfilment of socialism or the social ownership of the means of production. In the present controversy it might rather be said that they are in practice fulfilling the rôle of stalking horses to draw the fire of the left, while the real representatives of right wing orthodoxy in high places go unscathed. For the real representatives of right wing leadership in the Labour Party are still firmly established in the Executive majority and in the dominant control of Transport House. Development of the working class and socialism would have reached a very much more advanced stage in Britain than is

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yet in view if the dominant Labour Party leadership were ruthlessly bent on taking over the main economic resources of the nation out of the hands of the capitalist owners into social ownership, and only a tiny minority of big industrialists in the Labour Party, represented by Messrs. Shawcross and Stokes, were resisting this course. But this is not the situation.

New Revisionist Offensive

The truth is that the main right wing offensive, the new revisionist offensive, which is seeking to attack the basis of the traditional conception of socialism as the social ownership of the means of production, and to re-educate the rank and file away from these 'obsolete' notions, is being led by the dominant leadership, by the Executive majority, by the entire official propaganda of Transport House, and runs like a red thread through the entire social economic theory of the new series of policy statements. The old revisionist offensive of the early Fabians and Bernstein sought to destroy the conceptions of Marxism, of the revolutionary socialist transformation of society through the political power of the working class and expropriation of the capitalists and landlords, and to substitute the conception of the attainment of the aim of socialism or social ownership through a painless gradual evolutionary transition by a parliamentary majority. That conception was killed by the experience of the Third Labour Government with an absolute parliamentary majority, which carried important reforms, but made no change in the class ownership of wealth. The new revisionist offensive seeks to destroy the very conception of socialism as the social ownership of the means of production or all-round nationalisation as equivalent to Marxism, and to substitute the conception of socialism as an 'ethical ideal' of a 'classless society' (classes undefined) of 'social justice' and 'greater equality', fully compatible with the maintenance of capitalism, subject to the extension of liberal reforms, social security, redistributive taxation and a measure of state intervention or participation in profit-making joint stock enterprise. Against this new revisionist offensive the left adherents of socialism put up their resistance. But the leader of the new revisionist offensive is Mr. Gaitskell, the Leader of the Labour Party.

Mr. Gaitskell's Theory

The theory of Mr. Gaitskell may be studied in his booklet 'Socialism and Nationalisation', published last year; and its further

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outline has been amplified in the Penguin Special of the right-wing Socialist Union under the title 'Twentieth Century Socialism'. Mr. Gaitskell sets himself to demolish 'the traditional arguments linking nationalisation and socialism'. He conducts a polemic against this conception as a 'Marxist' conception. In opposition to this he sets forth the aim of the Labour Party as 'social equality', 'equality of opportunity', 'full employment' and 'industrial democracy'.

> In short, the society we wish to create is one in which there are no social classes, equal opportunity in the sense described above, a high degree of economic equality, full employment, rapidly rising productivity, democracy in industry and a general spirit of co-operation between its members.

What does Mr. Gaitskell mean by 'class'? The professed aim of the abolition of classes would require the ending of the class ownership of the means of production. But this brings us back to social ownership. Mr. Gaitskell evades this difficulty by failing to define 'class' save as a 'section of society'. Thus the 'classless society' which Mr. Gaitskell advocates, and which has become the favourite slogan of current right wing propaganda, becomes a society in which there are no 'sections of society'.

Alternatives to Nationalisation

The problem which Mr. Gaitskell sets himself is: 'How far can the ideals of socialism be achieved by means other than nationalisation?' Or again:

> The most vital question is how far greater social and economic equality can be achieved without more nationalisation and public ownership.

He warns on the need to be 'exceedingly careful not to ascribe to public ownership as such possibilities which really spring from a different *political* system which we have no intention of adopting'. In 'the democratic process', as he describes it, 'there is bound to be for a very long time a substantial private sector', and 'this private sector must work smoothly and efficiently'. In searching for alternatives he examines the possibilities of redistributory taxation measures, but warns against 'the dangers which they might involve in a still predominantly private enterprise economy (which is assumed here)'.

Joint Stock Socialism

Hence he comes down in favour of the conception of extending the rôle of the State in industry and economic life by the State

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entering into direct partnership with private monopoly capitalism as a joint shareholder. The cash for this acquisition of shares could be provided, as one alternative, through the receipt of death duties in 'equity shares and real estate'. What new taxation would be imposed to make up for this removal of the income from death duties from the ordinary budget is not considered. Since either new taxation would have to be imposed to the same extent, or expenditure correspondingly cut, the theory of utilising the device of death duties to acquire a share in capitalism without paying for it becomes fictitious. Alternatively, he proposes 'a budget surplus to purchase equity shares' (that is, more taxation or reduced expenditure), or the establishment of public investment corporations to purchase shares in private industry. The pensions policy plan has subsequently proposed that the funds derived from the increased contributions might be used for this purpose. These public investment corporations 'would in effect be large investment trusts—not so different in their operation from the insurance companies or some other financial institutions'. 'Socialism' *à la* Prudential!

Suez Canal Company Model for Socialism

Thus would be established the new form of 'mixed enterprise involving a partnership between the state and private firms'—in other words, the direct business alliance between the State and profit-making monopoly capitalism with a common interest in the maximum extraction of profits. Such is the 'New Socialism' presented under the alias of 'Democratic Socialism'. The idea, however, is not so new as the antediluvian 'New Thinkers' would like to imagine. Disraeli anticipated them in the nineteenth century when with the aid of Rothschild money he acquired for the State major participation in the Suez Canal Company. The subsequent Egyptian act of nationalisation aroused angry indignation, not only from Tory, but also from Labour imperialist quarters. Sir Winston Churchill carried further forward the model by his bold stroke in acquiring for the State major shares in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, as it then was. The subsequent nationalisation by the people of Iran aroused the hot anger of Mr. Morrison and the Labour Government, and led to the dispatch of warships to Abadan. It is clear that we have here an 'alternative to nationalisation', as desired. But the 'alternative' is in fact monopoly capitalism or imperialism, with all the consequences which flow from this.

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'Totalitarianism' and 'Democratic Socialism'

This direct alliance with monopoly capitalism is falsely presented under the title 'Democratic Socialism'. The attachment of a label 'Honest Man' does not, however, make a burglar less of a criminal. The alluring peaceful picture of 'Democratic Socialism' is presented as the alternative to the horrors of 'Totalitarianism'. But the cat is let out of the bag when the 'New Thinkers' reveal that by 'Totalitarianism' they mean the social ownership of the means of production.

> What has to be rejected is the idea of transformation through total public ownership; that leads only to totalitarianism. . . .
>
> The reason why a socialist economy requires a private sector is because socialists place a value on individual freedom.
>
> (*Twentieth Century Socialism*, 1956, pp. 146 and 148.)

We are back to Tory Democracy. Private capitalism is presented as the foundation of 'individual freedom'. The 'New Thinkers' carry a somewhat ancient odour.

True Face of 'Democratic Socialism'

The Suez war demonstrated what these principles mean in practice. The Suez war was universally condemned by the public opinion of the world as an unjust war of imperialist aggression in the interests of finance-capital. But behind the fomenters of the Suez war stood the powerful magnates of the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company, with the major shares held by the British and French Governments, which the Egyptian Government had dared to nationalise—the very example of the 'mixed enterprise involving a partnership between the state and private firms' held up as the New Model for 'Socialism' by the Gaitskell school. The Suez war was universally execrated as a criminal enterprise of three aggressor States whose action was condemned by an unparalleled majority in the United Nations Assembly. But who were the three aggressors? One was the Diehard Tory Macmillan. His two associates were Guy Mollet and Ben-Gurion—leaders of two major parties in the Socialist International—apostles of 'Democratic Socialism' in action. The Algerian war has revealed the same truth. The victory of socialist democracy requires the victory of the political power of the working class and the ending of the capitalist class ownership of the means of production. But the lying painted mask of so-called 'Democratic Socialism' is only used to hide the hideous reality of imperialism.

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Price of Alliance with Monopoly Capitalism

If the programme of joint stock association with the big monopolies as the official substitute for socialism were to be adopted by the Labour Party, then the consequences would be even more serious than those already demonstrated in the experience of the Third Labour Government. The laws of monopoly capitalism carry their own logic. The Attlee-Bevin-Cripps Labour Government of 1945-51 began with extensive social reforms. It ended with Crippsian austerity, the wage-freeze, the American atom bombers in Britain and the £4,700 million rearmament programme. It cannot be the wish of the labour movement to repeat this record. British monopoly capitalism is a sick, dying capitalism. Its interests, the compulsions of its recurrent crisis, drive to a ceaselessly renewed offensive against the standards equally of the colonial workers and peasants and dependent workers in overseas territories, and of the British workers. It was not the merit of the Labour Government, but against the opposition of the Labour Government and the right wing trade union leaders, that the wage freeze was finally defeated by the resistance of the organised workers.

Should a Labour Government Mean Lower Standards?

Even in the reform measures proposed in the new series of policy statements—reforms often in principle desirable, subject to amendment—the same guiding line of the capitalist offensive for lower real wages and standards runs like a red thread through every document. The housing proposals, at the same time as putting forward the positive plan for the municipal ownership of all rented housing, carry the implication of increasing rents. The colonial policy proposals urge that the British workers should be willing to forego improvements of standards in order to provide £160 million for colonial investment and development (in fact, development facilitating intensified exploitation by the big monopolies), while making no reference to the far larger profits of the imperialist combines extracted from the exploitation of the colonial workers and peasants. The pensions proposals urge that the increased contributions drawn from the workers' wages must not be accompanied by any demand for increased wages to meet the burden, *i.e.*, that real wages must be lowered. Indeed Mr. Crossman, in introducing the scheme, explained that it 'would involve the nation in a solemn obligation to slow down the improvement of the standard of living

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of those in work'. All this before even the formation of the new Government and the critical economic storms that may arise. 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?'

Symbol of the Daily Herald

The price of alliance with monopoly capitalism is death to the labour movement. The present precarious fate of the *Daily Herald* is once again demonstrating this truth. The *Daily Herald* was launched by the militant workers on strike. It was conducted in the early days by the support of the militant workers, in the same way as the *Daily Worker* is today. The Labour Party leadership sought to kill it in those days by founding an official daily organ which foundered in three years. When they could not kill it, they subsequently took advantage of its financial difficulties to take it over with the promise of official maintenance by the labour movement. That did not last long. In 1930 it was handed over to the millionaire firm of Odhams with majority share control in return for a guarantee to express official labour policy. With the expenditure of millions its circulation was boosted up to that of a capitalist mass organ. The Labour Party and T.U.C. leadership imagined that they had solved the problem of a daily newspaper, not by mobilising the support of the workers, but by alliance with finance-capital. Here was the 'practical', 'realist' fashion to maintain a daily labour newspaper, in contrast to the poor struggling *Daily Worker* which, founded in the same year, 1930, carried on the battle to maintain an independent daily working-class newspaper by the support of the workers.

Who Rides a Tiger

Today the wheel of history has brought its revenge. The present commercial crisis of the super-monopolist press combines in the jungle of Fleet Street, which have concentrated the control of the channels of information and expression of opinion for the millions of British democracy in the hands of a few millionaires, and which are now engaged in a battle to the death between the dinosaurs for survival, has brought in question the continued existence of the *Daily Herald* as even the pale echo of an official Labour organ which it had become. That name which once stirred the heart of every socialist fighter has now become a commodity to be judged by its profit and loss account rendered to the Conservative directorate of a millionaire combine. Proposals are under discussion, either for a severance of the present connection with the T.U.C. or for a

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merger. The grand alliance with finance-capital was not such a safe bet after all. The *Daily Herald* moves into the shadows. The struggling *Daily Worker* carries on the fight, unbought and unbuyable, by the support of the workers.

Confidence in the Working Class

It is no easy struggle. If the old independent fighting *Daily Herald* was justly called the Miracle of Fleet Street, in the far more onerous and intensified monopolist conditions of the British newspaper world today the continued maintenance of the *Daily Worker* is a ten times greater daily miracle. We know well enough from experience today in the world of periodicals, which are dying like flies on every side, with old and famous names vanishing, how hard a struggle it is to maintain a journal like *Labour Monthly*, which exists solely by the support of the workers and has no millionaire financial backers like *Tribune* or the *New Statesman and Nation*. But the final victory in the struggle of classes, which is the dominating feature and reaches its culmination in our era, goes and will always go to those who fight faithfully the battle of the working class by the support of the workers. That will be proved true also, in the final analysis, in the battle for the future of the political labour movement which will be carried one stage further in the coming Labour Party Conference this autumn.

June 18, 1957. R.P.D.

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SOME PROBLEMS IN ENGINEERING

L. AMBROSE

AFTER the settlement of the great Shipbuilding and Engineering national strikes of the end of March, new problems confront each section of the industry. But along with the new problems everyone is taking stock of their experience of these great struggles. Naturally there is keen controversy, expressed both in the union branches and union conferences: and these democratic discussions are a healthy sign. The pulse of trade unionism is beating strong and steady. It is invigorated by the recent struggles.

Amid the different viewpoints some things stand out clearly. First and foremost, the strike struggle, no matter what may be said of its tactics, justified itself completely. It was the threat of strike and then the strike itself which pushed the employers from their blank refusal, from their offer of precisely nothing, into making their cash offers of 8s. 6d. and 6s. 6d. This is the answer to any faint-hearts who are always sheering away from militant action and cherishing the illusion that the employers, without any such pressure, will turn out to be 'reasonable beings'.

A second feature of great importance is that the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions took the decision to strike *with unanimity*: and it was not only the Executive Committee of the Confederation but the Executive Committees of all the unions composing it that were thus unanimous. The Confederation is in my opinion basically more united than ever, in spite of internal discussions, for the simple reason that they have been not merely conferring together but carrying on a common struggle. The newspaper talk about democratic discussions as bound to end in dissensions and disruptions is not taken seriously by responsible people in the industry.

Now, from the date of the new agreement, twelve months lie ahead before the wages question will arise again. How are we to use this interval? A host of problems are crying out for solution. Let us tackle them—and as fast as possible. High up on this list of problems comes the forty-hour week: and there are many others of vital importance for the workers in all the kindred trades.

Again, we have a new influx of organised workers, solely due to the strikes: and one problem is how to consolidate this increased

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membership. In the Amalgamated Engineering Union alone we had in two months over 50,000 above the normal propositions for membership (and these had been coming in at a rate which had sent up our total by 200,000 in six years). All the other unions have benefited similarly from the intense class struggle of these weeks. To turn the new recruits into good trade unionists and stable members requires organising and propaganda campaigns. This too is one of the things to be tackled. Beyond such questions as these there are others where the workers in one or another section of the industry are closely affected by government policy, notably in aircraft and in motors. Behind the details of government measures such as the increase in hire purchase deposit on cars from 20 per cent. to 33⅓ per cent. there is government policy as a whole. Tied up to the United States, it subjects the people of this country to a crushing burden of continuous rearmament on a scale never known before in peace-time. Hence the rise in prices; hence the balance of payments headache—which cuts the import of steel and thereby reduces output; hence the crippling effect on peaceful development which could keep everyone employed. This Tory cabinet remained year after year subservient to the United States ban on exports to China: and it was only at the beginning of June that they reduced the extent of the ban to a lower level. Even the Chairman of the National Union of Manufacturers did not praise the government for this: he welcomed the step but described it as 'long overdue'. But why any bans at all upon East-West trade? Only because the general policy of the government is to continue its subservience to the United States monopolists. It is in our interest to alter this: and as soon as possible.

If I may take just one section of all the kindred trades, it will be seen that these arguments apply in the motor industry—which, however, has some problems quite apart from the difficulties placed in its way by the government which deliberately introduced the 'credit squeeze', increased purchase tax, and made more difficult hire purchase facilities, thus reducing sales on the home market.

The industry has also met increased competition from West Germany and other countries in overseas markets which has reduced sales considerably and has resulted in a fall in production during 1956 of approximately 900,000 cars to 700,000 and from approximately 340,000 goods and passenger vehicles to 300,000. This reduction meant that 50,000 workers left the industry during 1956 and many more thousands being on consistent short-time working of either three or four days per week.

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To justify its policy the government has argued that since all controls were removed in 1951 production rose by over one-half between 1951 and 1955. Practically all the increase in United Kingdom output of cars has been absorbed at home, with the result that the proportion of cars exported has fallen from three-quarters in 1951 to two-fifths in 1955. Thus, argues the government, it is necessary to impose some limitations on an industry for which sheet metal has to be imported from dollar areas and is not in turn being exported abroad. Whatever the validity of this argument, the manufacturers themselves have argued that they cannot develop exports without the backing of a thriving home market, particularly as it is necessary to sell abroad at competitive prices.

In an examination of the problems trade unionists must, of course, argue that it should be government policy to assist in the maximum expansion of an industry which has played such a big part in the economic recovery of the country and which can play an even bigger part providing all restrictions are removed.

In addition to easing the 'credit squeeze' the government should also be taking steps to remove all bans on east-west trade, this would facilitate a lessening of tension between east and west and, quite certainly, lead to a reduction in the present gigantic arms programme which is still running at the rate of £1,600 million per annum.

At home the government should take steps to ease restrictions on the home market, where there is still considerable scope for expansion in car ownership, especially when one compares the United Kingdom with the United States where there is one car for every three of the population; with Canada where there is one car for every six of the population and with Australia where there is one car for every eight of the population. In the United Kingdom there is one car for every sixteen of the population and there is little doubt that a considerable expansion could be achieved provided the Government were prepared to play their part by the removal of the present financial restrictions, by the expenditure of more money on roads and by an examination of the present method of motor taxation now operated. It would be far simpler if the annual rate of duty was completely abolished and a small registration fee substituted which could be paid once during the lifetime of the vehicle, or annually, and the bulk of the revenue raised by a tax on petrol. This would ensure equality between road users and would make it much easier for workers to own a motor vehicle without having heavy standing charges to pay.

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In addition, if trade bans were removed it may be necessary for the emphasis on the production of motor cars to be changed. There is little doubt that substantial orders could be obtained for tractors and four-wheel-drive vehicles from countries such as Russia and China where a tremendous expansion of industrial and agricultural activities can be expected over the next few years.

Trade unionists who are concerned with the future of the industry must continue to press as strongly as possible both the Government and the manufacturers to look ahead and to adapt the industry to the needs of markets which exist and which will exist in the years to come. Any other approach to the problems of the industry can only lead to further restrictions, further unemployment and short-time for the workers in the industry and to a reduction in the living standards which have been achieved so painfully over the years.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

WE ARE COMING, COMRADES!

One characteristic feature of the campaign of 1931 was the steady flow of troops from the government forces over to the Reds. Steady propaganda was carried on among the government forces by peasants in every village entered. Evacuating in the van of the advancing Kuomintang troops, the peasants would leave nothing behind but slogans chalked on walls and houses. Women would often remain and continue the work among the Whites. Tales of desertions were told by a returned soldier of the Ninth Division:

Out in the open at night, government soldiers would hear voices shouting to them through the darkness:

'Turn to us, Brothers!'

'Why should we fight each other?'

'Our cause is yours. We are all poor peasants!'

'We offer a way out of this misery!'

One night, this soldier related, a company was guarding a trench when these voices came again—loud and clear and seemingly from nearby.

'Listen,' said one, 'here come the voices again!'

They listened and there was an uneasy stir among the soldiers. They whispered in low voices. A few nights later when the division had advanced a few miles farther on, the voices came again. This company of men, holding one of the outposts, rose and listened.

'Lie down!' shouted their officer. A few minutes later he was dead and his company running across the field.

'We are coming, comrades!'

This was a nightly occurrence throughout the campaign. Among themselves the White soldiers would jocularly refer to their armies as 'ammunition transports for the Reds.'

From *Kuomintang versus Soviets*, by A.Y.
July, 1932.

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EUROPE ONE OR DIVIDED?

QUÆSTOR

SOME features of the twelfth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (April 29-May 15) make it a valuable pointer to the real dangers at present threatening the world.

Most people who follow international affairs know that E.C.E.—its usual title—is the one United Nations organisation in which socialist and capitalist governments have for several years co-operated in practical matters, although on secondary questions. Its annual full sessions at Geneva have debated the general economic situation in Europe, and in the socialist and capitalist countries, with comparative restraint. Its various specialised committees—coal, steel, electric power, timber, housing, agricultural problems, inland transport, trade development, etc.—have included experts from non-members of the United Nations (both the German Republics, for example), made possible the exchange of valuable technical information, and have started standardising processes and co-ordinating national activities in their respective spheres. The all-in 'trade consultations' of scores of commercial experts from many countries, held at Geneva in the autumn to arrange tentative bilateral deals in a first round of talks and then, when necessary, to go on to multilateral arrangements in a second round, have become a regular feature of E.C.E. work. Its annual reviews of European economy and other economic surveys are widely used and in many respects authoritative.

The reports for 1956-57 presented this year provide many illustrations of the useful work of the Commission. Take one example. One of its many committees alone—that on agricultural problems—had three sub-committees working under chairmen appointed by capitalist governments (Switzerland, Belgium and Sweden) and three with chairmen from socialist countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania). It reached agreement on forms of draft contracts for the international sale of cereals and citrus fruit: it worked out international regulations on standardisation of perishable foodstuffs (vegetables, fruit, eggs, certain fresh fish, etc.), it approved and distributed five highly practical reports—from countries politically as widely separated as the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.—on different aspects of mechanisation of agriculture: it began collecting

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information from all countries on new methods of planting vineyards and of soil conservation. Moreover, it arranged for groups of experts on particular questions to visit Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic on the one hand and Holland, France and Britain on the other. Other committees reported activities more varied and practically useful.

However, discussion of these reports was not the most striking feature of the session this year.

The positive and practical work of E.C.E. has never been achieved automatically and smoothly. It is not something particular about the Geneva air which ensured that modest degree of collaboration between east and west. The capitalist governments have kept E.C.E. going as a working body, when all other branches of the United Nations have only too often been brought to a standstill, in order to keep in reserve some machinery of co-operation, 'just in case'. But it has never been allowed to develop as it could have done, because of their hatred of the socialist states.

How many know, for example, that when the Americans were putting forward the Marshall Plan—for economic 'aid' to European countries with political and military strings, pulled by the U.S.A.—they (and the Labour Government) rejected the Soviet Union's alternative proposal for such aid: that it should be organised through E.C.E.? There all states large and small are equal. In E.C.E. their requirements could be co-ordinated without involving subordination to U.S.A. control. And that was just why E.C.E. wouldn't do: they would have slipped through the Americans' fingers.

This year the Soviet Union submitted a draft 'All-European Agreement on Economic Co-operation'. The draft pledged participating states to encourage bilateral and multilateral economic agreements, with exchange of economic, scientific and technical information: and to co-operate in helping underdeveloped countries without political or other conditions. It pledged them to such measures, for this purpose, as (i) unconditional 'most-favoured-nation' treatment in trade and shipping relations with each other (ii) long term agreements to stabilise trade development (iii) multilateral settlements of accounts and credits (iv) co-operation between their insurance organisations (v) arbitration in disputes arising from commercial contracts (vi) facilities for international trade fairs and exhibitions (vii) standard forms of contract (viii) close co-operation in rail, sea, air and river traffic. The Agreement further pledged

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the exchange of production experience, co-operation in peaceful uses of atomic energy within the framework of E.C.E. and joint development of Europe's natural resources in water power, gas, etc.

This proposal if adopted would have marked an unprecedented step forward to comprehensive co-operation (not merely peaceful co-existence) of capitalist and socialist states in Europe. It would have meant the real pooling of many forms of economic activity for the common benefit. It would have thoroughly 'mixed up' east and west with one another. It would also have ended the possibility of further charges that the socialist states believe in 'autarky' (economic isolation and self-sufficiency).

No doubt these were the very reasons why nearly all the capitalist states turned it down. In this respect the comments of the various governments, laid before the session, are extremely illuminating: for they reveal deliberate rejection *on principle* of even an attempt at large-scale economic co-operation between capitalist and socialist states.

There were a number of minor excuses given for rejecting the Soviet proposals which read like the answers of a Minister at question-time in the House of Commons. The proposals were too vague and general—or alternatively they committed the signatories to dangerous undertakings—or they were unnecessary because they were already being discussed elsewhere—or they were premature, etc., etc. The excuses varied from Government to Government. But there was one which recurred again and again; and it was the decisive one, because it went deepest.

Most-favoured-nation arrangements would be inapplicable because of the difference between east and west 'in both legal and economic structure' (France). They 'pose virtually insoluble problems for countries with economic systems very different from those in force in Eastern Europe' (Great Britain). The basic difficulty is 'the incompatibility in many respects of Western and Soviet economic and social thought and practices' (U.S.A.). Reciprocity in marine insurance 'cannot operate between countries with different economic standards' (Turkey). 'Existing differences in the economic, political, social and legal systems of the countries of eastern and western Europe' preclude practical implementation of such an Agreement (Ireland). Possibilities of international economic co-operation between 'countries with totally different political, social and economic systems' are limited (Netherlands). And so on. The chorus read like a Papal Bull of Excommunication.

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The fact that (as the Secretariat of E.C.E. pointed out) broad 'frame agreements' on principle, supplemented by more detailed and specific annexes which could be made subject to parliamentary approval in the countries concerned, have already been applied in international relations, counted for nothing with the capitalist governments. Nor did the fact that (as the Secretariat also pointed out) the most-favoured-nation clause already appears in treaties and agreements signed with the U.S.S.R. by Great Britain (1934), France (1951) and other countries—in spite of the alleged 'insoluble problems' it raises.

Pinned to the wall in fact by the Soviet proposals for economic co-operation—just as in the case of the Soviet disarmament proposals—the capitalist Powers were forced to drop their mask, and to reveal that it is their opposition, and not that of the U.S.S.R., which is the obstacle to joint work for the common good. Their ardent defence of the proposals for a 'Common Market' (of six Western countries!)—as against an agreement for all Europe—only pointed the lesson.

Willy-nilly the Commission had to fall back on the decision to 'examine' piecemeal those proposals in the Soviet draft which are not being already considered elsewhere.

Much the same happened with a Soviet draft resolution to establish an Atomic Energy Committee under the E.C.E., with specific duties aimed at 'organising all-European regional co-operation in the economic aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy'. The resolution provided that 'the Committee shall co-ordinate its work closely with that of the International Atomic Energy Agency, if and when such a body is established'.

The arguments used by the capitalist Powers to refuse such co-operation showed a lamentable—but very significant—lack of inventiveness. They objected that it was 'premature', because the International Agency was still under discussion—as though steps to establish co-operation in such a supremely important matter over such a huge area as Europe, with its immense economic resources, would not be a great leg-up for the international negotiations. Next, they said, it was 'unnecessary' because six Powers of Western Europe were coming to a similar arrangement among themselves ('Euratom'): and in any case it was 'doubtful' whether regional arrangements were desirable. Why (as one delegate rightly pointed out) 'sub-regional' arrangements ('radiating a spirit of exclusion')

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were all right, but all-in, continental ones doubtful, and why a 'Euratom' of six Powers is necessary, but a real Euratom of 32 Powers, without quotation marks, is unnecessary—none of them explained. Lastly, many of them said, they didn't have enough trained experts for both the I.A.E.A. and a European organisation —when it was obvious that such training would be a major concern of the Atomic Energy Committee ('exchange of scientific and technical experience in this field' was one of its proposed objects).

Here once more, the refusal to commit themselves to long-term peaceful co-operation with the socialist countries—which would be guaranteed by the non-exclusive character of the proposed Committee—was the heart of the thing; and the Commission accordingly could do no more than postpone consideration of the Soviet proposals for a year.

The rejection of these two opportunities—on issues which surely are of capital importance to the whole of humanity, in view of Europe's position in the world—does not mean that nothing useful was done at the Geneva session. The E.C.E. specialised Committees were invited to consider at their first session each year, how best to promote further contacts between east and west. An arrangement was agreed to by which governments engaged in bilateral trade between east and west (about two-thirds of east-west trade in Europe is done under bilateral agreements) will have the help of the E.C.E. Secretariat in settling the balances arising by 'multilateral compensation', *i.e.*, by trade with third or fourth parties. Important international study of means to fight water pollution: consideration of practical problems of the development and international exchange of gas resources—these and many other technical questions were included in an extensive programme of work for the coming year. These decisions were a new confirmation of the fact proclaimed at the session by its chairman Dr. Oskar Lange (Poland) on May 2—that 'reconstruction of Europe and a steady development of the economies of European countries can be undertaken successfully only on the basis of co-operation of all the countries of Europe'.

But again it was confirmation on a small and petty level. The great opportunities for an inspiring and far-reaching demonstration of peaceful intentions and the will to co-operate were once more thrown away. Responsibility for this rejection falls, openly and squarely, on the capitalist Powers.

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Unwilling to wait with folded h

Into Trafalgar Square through torrential rain
marched in silent protest against the

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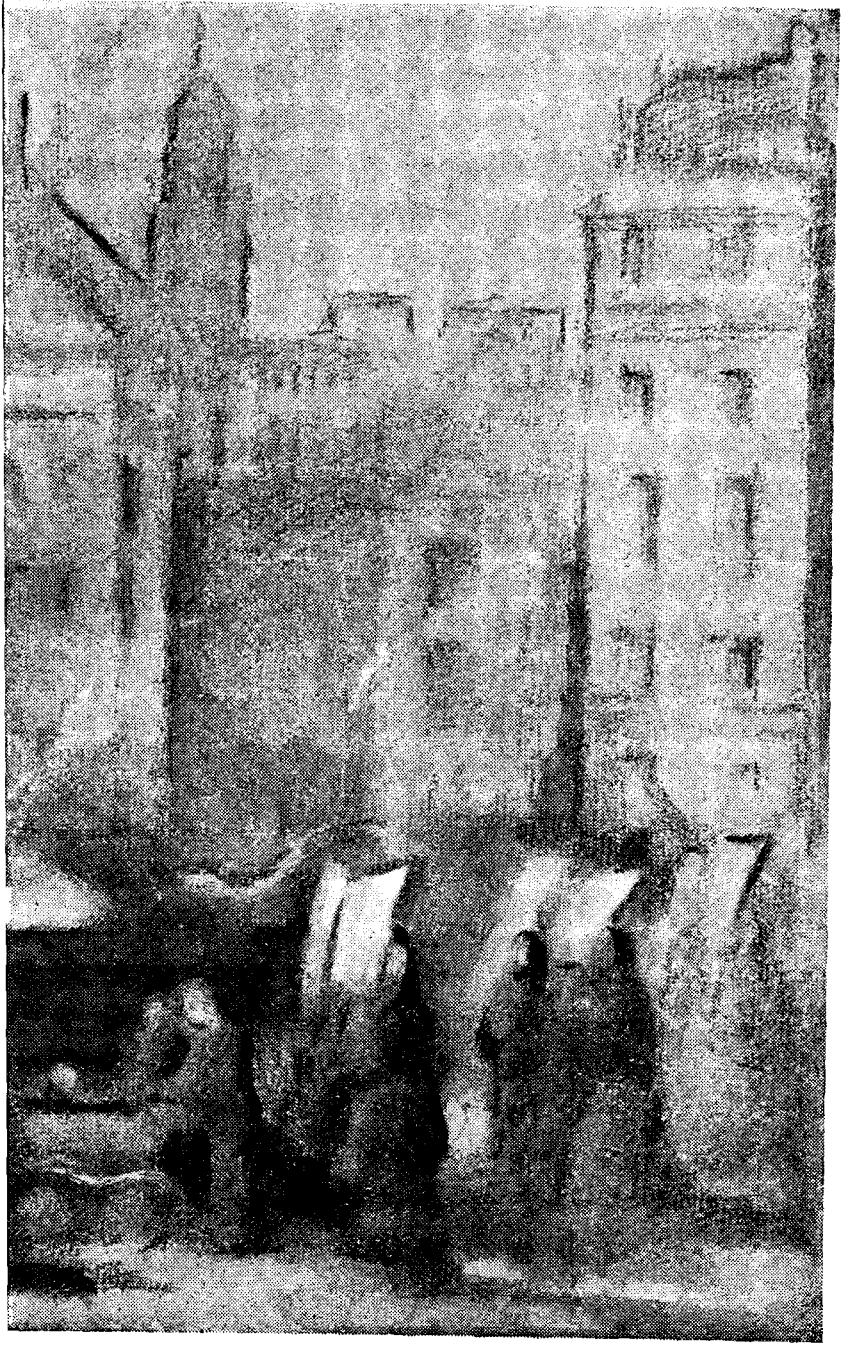

ay 12, 1957, hundreds of women in black
b. (*Drawing by Helen Wilson.*)

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CONSPIRACY DOWN UNDER

GORDON SCHAFFER

A WEEK before the Australian Federal Elections in December, 1955, a mysterious fire took place at the headquarters of the Security Police in Sydney. Were the documents on which the Petrov case was based, destroyed? And were they destroyed to prevent them from being examined by a Labour government led by Dr. Evatt? As it happened the Menzies government just scraped back to power, so there has never been an answer to that question. What is certain is that despite repeated demands by Dr. Evatt, neither he nor anyone else outside the Menzies government and their carefully chosen Royal Commission have been allowed to examine the documents used to smear the characters of many Australians and to disrupt relations between Australia and the Soviet Union.

This is only one of the telling points in the analysis by Mr. W. J. Brown* of the evidence given before the Royal Commission and the events that led to its appointment. Mr. Brown left more lucrative employment on the Sydney daily press to work for the left wing *Tribune* and it was for that paper he covered the year-long inquiry. He does not conceal his own views on the whole affair and it is easy to dismiss his book as special pleading. But fortunately, he has also printed as an appendix the speech made by Dr. Evatt in the Federal Parliament on October 19, 1955, when the report of the Commission was debated. Dr. Evatt is one of Australia's foremost lawyers. In the past he has often criticised the Communist Party and during his period as Australia's delegate to the United Nations he was equally critical of the Soviet Union. His speech is one of the most devastating indictments in history. It is documented and backed with evidence from start to finish and it bears out on almost every point the case made by Mr. Brown in this book. And it cannot be dismissed as special pleading.

The evidence piles up to prove the declaration by Dr. Evatt that 'When this tangled skein is finally unravelled the Petrov-Menzies letters will rank in Australian history as an equivalent to the notorious Zinoviev letter which was used to defeat a Labour govern-

**The Petrov Conspiracy Unmasked,* by W. J. Brown. Current Book Distributors, Sydney. 21s.

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ment in the 1924 British elections and the burning of the Reichstag which was used to usher in the Hitler régime in 1933'.

Both Dr. Evatt and Mr. Brown prove by detailed analysis that if the normal rules of evidence had been applied by the Royal Commission, if it had even accepted the rules laid down for the Lynskey Tribunal in Britain, almost all the material presented by the Petrovs would have been dismissed. They go further and produce a mass of evidence to show that the documents alleged to have been brought from the Soviet Embassy by Petrov were in fact forged by the Australian Security police. They give chapter and verse to support the contention that a security agent deliberately 'leaked' details of an American-Australian economic treaty to a left wing journalist in order to discredit Dr. Burton, Minister for External Affairs in the previous Labour government and to give credence to the allegation that a 'nest of traitors exists in the public service'. This particular agent was actually brought before the commission to give evidence that she wormed her way in to the journalist's family circle and on instructions gave him material which had first been vetted by the security officials.

They show that in the case of Madame Ollier, the second secretary of the French Embassy, who was branded as a spy and sent back to France under arrest, Petrov approached her with a demand for information *after* he had agreed to sell out for £5,000 to the security police. In other words, there could be no other purpose but provocation and in any case the information said to have been under discussion had already been published in the Australian press. Despite all this the Court refused to clear Madame Ollier, although her innocence has now been completely established by a French court.

When the Court heard Petrov's story that 25,000 dollars had been paid to Mr. L. L. Sharkey of the Australian Communist Party, the utmost care was taken in getting from Petrov the exact date of the alleged transaction. Then to the discomfiture of everyone who had built up the elaborate story, a security agent had to go into the witness box to confirm Sharkey's story that all through the day named by Petrov, he was at a meeting of his central committee with security agents firmly planted at every entrance and exit! To cap this particular comedy, Petrov swore the money had been paid over in 25-dollar bills, a denomination that has never existed.

One of the documents used in the case did get into the hands of Dr. Evatt. He submitted it to one of the foremost handwriting

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experts in the country, an expert who had been called in numerous court cases. The expert completely demolished the case put to the Royal Commission. As Dr. Evatt told the Federal Parliament this evidence meant that the documents were fabricated and he demanded that all the documents should be made available for inspection by M.P.s. That request was never granted and maybe the convenient fire on the eve of the last election has ensured that they never will. Dr. Evatt stressed too that the fact that Petrov was paid £5,000 before he deserted was carefully concealed from the public till after the election while many of the allegations made at the Hollywood-style opening of the Commission before the election were carefully forgotten after the Menzies government was safely back in power.

A lot of people besides Petrov made big money out of the affair. Many of the people involved in the plot to stage the case just before the elections have written their own accounts and Mr. Brown has drawn on these sources. For example, he quotes evidence to prove that a Menzies supporter boasted in the Sydney press that he had arranged the riots at the time when Mrs. Petrov was supposed to have been saved from the plane due to take her to Moscow. These accounts confirm at almost every point the case made by Dr. Evatt that the whole affair was a gigantic frame-up, that the documents in the case were faked from material in the hands of the security organisation and that Petrov was paid for his part in the plot.

But the most important part of the whole sordid story is the evidence that the attack was not only on the communists but on the whole Labour movement. The Royal Commission, despite its refusal to consider evidence rebutting the Petrov allegations was forced to conclude that there was no case justifying criminal action. Yet dozens of reputations were attacked and the newspapers had full rein to smear both individuals and organisations. Most significantly the members of the right wing break-away group in the Labour Party, which Evatt finally defeated were even more virulent in their support for the witch-hunt than many of Menzies' supporters.

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WORKERS' COUNCILS IN POLAND

W. GOMULKA

[*From a speech by W. Gomulka at the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee, Polish United Workers' Party, May 15, 1957.—Ed., L.M.*]

THE workers' councils are a form of workers' democracy in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, encompassing the production field as well as the field of management.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, understood as a democracy of the working masses, is a much broader concept than the notion of workers' councils. For the dictatorship of the proletariat encompasses all the problems pertaining to government and the exercise of power in a democratic manner in a socialist state. The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat includes, for example, the worker-peasant alliance which expresses the political side of the exercise of power by the workers and working peasants through the medium of institutions such as the Seym and of the people's councils, elected by them. The concept of workers' councils, however, narrows down to a direct sector, enclosed within a definite framework of management exercised by the workers over their work establishments. If then the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies socialist democracy and is a form of broad democracy for the working masses, implemented under the hegemony of the working class and the leadership of the Party, or putting it in a different way, if people's democracy is a form or a specific variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers' councils in Poland are only one out of many links of the dictatorship of the proletariat and signify workers' democracy in the sector of managing industrial production, as well as in certain other sectors of the national economy.

The workers' councils are not organs of the political power of the working class—the rôle which, in the history of the working class movement, was played by the Soviets of Workers' Deputies. Nor are they units of the administrative machinery of the people's State. The workers' councils are organs through which the working class directly participates in the management of the national economy, takes part much more widely and thoroughly than so far in the functions of the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, a State which is building socialism.

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The question arises whether the workers' councils are the only form of workers' participation in the management of work establishments? Did not the workers have in the past when there were no workers' councils in Poland, and even now when workers' councils have not been elected in all production establishments as yet, the possibility to participate in the management of their work establishments and of the whole national economy?

Negative answers cannot be given to these questions. The working class had such possibilities, although to a smaller extent, also in the past. These possibilities, not taking into consideration all intermediary forms, were expressed in the well defined powers of the trade unions, works' councils, as well as in the power of party organisations. We never had a situation in which the working class and the workers in the factories were deprived completely of the possibility of participating in the management of the national economy and of the work establishment, and in which they did not avail themselves at all of these possibilities. The fact is that these possibilities, although broad from a formal point of view, were narrowed down and distorted owing to the violation of the fundamental principles of socialism, owing to the bureaucratisation of many functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, owing to over-simplified administrative forms in which the leading rôle of the Party manifested itself. The idea of the workers' councils came into existence as a certain antidote to the ailments within the socialist system, as a means to restore its proper meaning to the dictatorship of the proletariat and working class democracy, in such an important field as the management of industrial establishments.

Erroneous, however, would be the opinion that in the socialist countries where there are no workers' councils the working class is deprived of an instrument of management of their own work establishments and of the national economy. Such an instrument could be constituted equally well by the trade unions and by the works' councils endowed with suitable powers. In our country, however, the form of the workers' councils emerged by the will of the working class. No small influence on the adoption of this form was exercised by the volume of criticism directed against the activity of the trade unions which, owing to the grave defects in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat also were affected by these ailments, for they themselves constitute an important link in a State of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In conjunction with the above-mentioned factors, the idea of the workers' councils arose in Poland also from the search for new and

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better forms of managing the national economy and exercising state power. Life bears testimony to the fact that forms once adopted are not eternal and immutable. In a given situation, the Yugoslav Communists changed these forms in their country. The idea of workers' councils introduced in Poland has its origin in Yugoslavia, although basing ourselves on the Yugoslav experience we see that our councils should develop in a different direction from that of Yugoslavia.

A second example of a change in the forms of managing the national economy is now provided by the Soviet Union. The plans mapped out in this field by the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet government, plans whose implementation will certainly require a long period of time, will not only result in a basic transformation of the whole burdensome and costly existing system of managing the national economy, but at the same time will bring about owing to the change of this system many positive improvements in other fields of the life of the nations and the Republics of the Soviet Union. In other socialist countries, too, a search can be noticed for ways to improve the management of the economy and to broaden workers' democracy, above all through widening the powers of the trade unions.

As usual, when new forms of organisation appear in life they are accompanied by a certain confusion; and so, now that we have started organising workers' councils, various false conceptions have arisen as to the scope of the rights that the workers' councils should possess.

There are voices, vague and not clearly defined it is true, expressing the idea that the work establishments be handed over as a sort of collective property of the various personnels, which would manage them independently through the workers' councils. Every man who is even a little economically minded must reject such a conception for the following reasons. If every factory became a collective, a sort of co-operative property of the workers, then all the laws governing the capitalist economy would come into play, only with worse results. Central planning and management, which is a basic feature of socialism, would have to disappear from the national economy. The prices of goods produced by the various factories would be governed by the market in an unrestrained manner on the basis of the law of supply and demand. For every factory would independently plan its own production regardless of other factories. Investments would also be dictated by the market, but with worse results than in capitalism. For the capitalist him-

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self, or a company of capitalists, is the owner of the factory. He can therefore earmark an enormous part of the profits gained for investments, because even the minimum part of the profits earmarked for his personal needs ensures him the standard of living he decides to allot himself. On the other hand, the workers as collective owners of the factory having a relatively low standard of living would always have a tendency to raise their wages as high as possible without paying attention to investments.

I will not speak about all the consequences of such a system of socialising, or rather, of reverting in the direction of capitalist work establishments. The examples I have given are enough to draw the conclusion that with such a system the national economy would not have anything in common with socialism and would speedily crash to its downfall. Therefore, there is no sense in even speaking about this conception.

Other voices demand that workers' councils should be set up not only at work establishments, but should extend upwards according to branches of production. Such a conception means the abolition of central boards as managing organs in the national economy. Without discussing the question of the activity of the central boards, the scope of their powers, etc., the conception of replacing the central boards by branch workers' councils expresses well the idea contained in the Polish proverb, expressing the thought of going from bad to worse.

Workers' councils on a higher level than the factory level would of necessity have to be paid by the State, or—which comes to the same thing—by the factory. They would therefore become paid councils, and the results would be that after the liquidation of the central boards these paid councils would take over their functions and would themselves become central boards. Having no experience, they would manage the branch of the economy under them very much worse than the present central boards. They would not even be able to manage the economy well even after a long period, for the idea of the workers' councils is that they are elected and periodically changed. Before the members of the council could more or less master the art of management, their term of office would come to an end. In their place others would come, or at least others might come. They would therefore have no time to learn to manage.

What is more, if one says 'a', one should also say 'b'. Workers' councils built up vertically in all branches of the national economy

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would have to be subordinated to some central supervisory authority. Would it be the government? The government cannot be a supervisory authority of social organisations such as the workers' councils. The conception would then remain to set up another central body by way of direct or indirect elections. It is here that we notice suddenly that the whole conception is leading us astray. The government, it appears, must cease to deal with the national economy, becomes unnecessary, for there is some other central body, a sort of cap put on the head of the workers' councils which has taken over the management of the national economy in the country. And if it should want to manage, it will have to take over from the government central planning, the banks, purchases, trade, etc., in one word all the powers of the government. The government would become superfluous. In short, an anarchist utopia would emerge from this whole conception. I do not suppose it is worth while discussing this conception any longer.

There still is a third conception consisting in not liquidating the central boards but in creating workers' councils at these boards. The question arises what for and with what purpose in view? What are the workers' councils to do in the central boards? If one assumes that with their aid one could improve the activity of the central boards, liquidate bureaucracy and ensure a better flow of supplies of raw materials to the factories, or well-organised inter-factory co-operation, this would mean that the members of the workers' councils would simply be better managers and workers than the present managers and workers of the central boards. Even if one accepted this premise as correct, would it not be better simply to replace unsuitable workers and put in their place in the central boards better ones, those whom one would want to see in the rôle of members of workers' councils?

In fact, the whole meaning of this third conception boils down to the problem of people of professional qualifications and the social values of man. Many of our difficulties, both in the field of managing the economy as well as in other fields, arise precisely from this source, are caused by the callousness of man, the loss of the social and socialist way of thinking, so indispensable at each working post, in each field of socialist construction.

The workers' councils at the central boards cannot be of any advantage and are therefore unnecessary. They would not even fulfil the function of workers' control over the activity of the central

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boards, but could only in a certain measure make it easier for various bureaucrats to shift responsibility for various shortcomings to the workers' councils. And if only workers' control were involved, it could be organised in a different manner, for example through the trade unions possibly acting in co-operation with factory workers' councils.

That is why the Party must say clearly and firmly to the inventors of such and similar conceptions: stop sowing confusion in your own heads and in the heads of the workers. If based on such conceptions, the idea of workers' councils would be only discredited, would fail the hopes put by the working class in the workers' councils. The absurd idea must also be abandoned that the rejection of such conceptions by the Party indicates a withdrawal from the October positions, from the resolutions of the 8th Plenum.

In the sector of the workers' councils, just as in all other sectors, we are acting in accordance with the resolutions of the 8th Plenum, in accordance with the direction of the policy of the Party, mapped out by the 8th Plenum, in accordance with the real possibilities and needs of the transformation of the system of managing the national economy. The powers of the workers' councils are by no means too small, or insufficient to attain great economic successes and to ensure the implementation of the guiding idea of the workers' councils—of workers' democracy in work establishments.

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CHINA FIRST SEEN

(Leaves from a diary, III)

Thursday, October 11. En route for Nanking

THE journey southward from the great new North East has been distinctly international in flavour. The dining car, built in China, is neat and elegant with little panels of Chinese paintings above the windows. (The service excellent no scurrying but great speed: the cooking first-class.) But the sleeping car, in wagon-lit style, is made at Goerlitz in the German Democratic Republic. Quite new: I think we are the first users. It is the best I have ever been in. Amongst our travelling companions is an Australian whom Jean Gallacher met in Melbourne; we chatted after lunch. I had a long talk with an Indian journalist also travelling with us. He is much interested in the adoption of an alphabet here. He would like to see an international script. This would get over the difficulty they face in India, where there are ten more or less separate alphabets.

We seem constantly in view of mountains and ranges of hills, some oddly recalling the Grampians seen from the railway to Aberdeen. Some are quite low more like braes or even downs, but bare of trees in the main. There are fields all the way with a very tall cereal—it is kaoliang. I used to see this name in trade tables but knew not what it was. This grain is twice the height of a man. They seem to be reaping it with sickles. It would be admirable cover for guerilla warfare, and what giant straw it must yield. Then there were many fields of what I take to be rice: every now and then in these fields are barrows, little burial mounds only a few feet high.

I notice shelter belts planted on either side of the railway line. In the fields as in Peking they wear a royal blue and an electric blue. (I must find out what is the dye. Woad? Indigo?) Relics of the war of eight years ago, concrete block-houses and machine-gun nests are seen at some of the bridges and near all the stations. I am told that the retreating Kuomintang used an American machine designed for tearing up the railway lines. One of the Danes with us tells me that a century ago, Denmark set about tree planting on its many infertile places such as the sands beside the sea and that now it is really well wooded: that the dialect of Jutland sounds similar to the Scottish dialect as heard in this railway carriage and that words too correspond. His fellow-countryman Axel Larsen had spent years in a

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Nazi German concentration camp: of this he spoke little. His talk was of books about Genghiz Khan and the earlier dynasties in China. From the train we watched the ceaseless activity in the fields and then saw some of them trudging homewards. There is no sign of bicycles and very few wheeled vehicles in this flat countryside—in contrast to Peking which in this matter is as like Cambridge as two peas. This whole immense stretch of apparently very rich land requires an abundance of tractors and also the result of tractors in man-power for industry.

We reached here at Tientsin early this morning and went a slow drive past European-Asian buildings, formerly European concessions, showing what had been. It is very unlike Peking. It is a vast commercial city with any number of business offices, big shops, banks and the like. Besides these is a considerable array of the residences of the concessionary population, some occupied by the Japanese, some held by the Kuomintang or war-lords. Now, seemingly these buildings are mostly taken over for better purposes. Leaving Tientsin, we sped all day across the plains, mainly rice fields flat to the horizon, with graves here and there, little mounds uncultivated. At one point we saw the sails of junks on the Grand Canal. Endless cultivation everywhere. An observation platform at the rear of our *wagon-lit* shows the permanent way mostly in a straight line—single track—with bridges over streams or with culverts, usually possessing two strongly built curved rails within the track. In the south of Shantung province we catch sight of Taishan, the mountain sacred to Confucious. Every here and there a railway station and small town, visible hives of ceaseless activity. To the Chinese it is a pleasure to see 'splendid black smoke' pouring from a chimney; for it means that here too industrialisation is under weigh. In U.K. we have a different outlook after three centuries or so of it: smokeless countryside pleases the eye. It was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that wild country began to be appreciated: read Boswell. But later Burns sings the Lowland hills and dales: he is not so ecstatic about the Hielands.

Friday, October 12, 1956

We crossed the Yangtze by train ferry. At last we saw the junks in full detail, big and little: also, vast flocks of ducks, jammed together by their herds, who herded them on the water. There must have been several score ducks nearly touching one another, almost like the super-gregarious walruses in *Life in the Arctic*. Are they

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catching fish for their owners, or what? What a vast river! To us this is as different from other rivers as the Pacific is different from other oceans. To the east is a huge building on the southern shore; formerly Vestley's Union Cold Storage for eggs, since sold to the state. I was told a little later that a similar sale had been made by Wills' of tobacco factories in Tientsin and Shanghai. This powerful British-built ferry boat took our long train in two portions which had meant much shunting that morning on the northern bank. On the south bank we are taken away in cars straight to Rain Flowery Hill to see the martyrs' memorial. It is named for a saint who prayed for the people afflicted by drought and brought a miraculous shower of rain. On this hill from 1929 to 1949 Chiang Kai-shek's regime put to death what were reckoned as 100,000 workers and intellectuals. Now it has been planted with trees, and gardens have been made and at the summit a memorial to these martyrs of the revolution. We went there and were told the story. William Gallacher made a short but moving speech.

Then we set off, in wonderful balmy weather, to see the Sun Yat-sen tomb built some 25 years ago. The way runs beside a tall city wall, and then through winding woodland roads. I have never seen anything like this 90-foot-high city wall, far higher than Peking's wall. What is more, every brick in this 500-year-old wall is stamped with the name of the man who made the clay, the man who put it in the kiln, and some other man, perhaps the foreman. Thus a faulty brick could be traced right back and those at fault punished, probably cruelly punished. They must have driven in droves of peasants, from this and other provinces as well, to build a structure of this magnitude. And what for? To protect themselves against a peasant rising seems the most likely answer in that quarter of China. So the peasants were building against themselves. We twist and turn through the woods till we reach the tomb of Dr. Sun lying on the flank of Purple-Gold mountain, running up towards the higher peak. The architects and designers have imitated the Ming builders. For all seems perfectly proportioned, with surprise after surprise, as William and I ascend 392 steps, and at the top have a panorama view of the ring of mountains that stretch east and south and west of Nanking. We come down and have a cup of tea in a pavilion nearby and go on a little way in the car, east along the mountainside to a famous pagoda, a Manchu restoration of what was destroyed in the time of the Taipings. We ascend one storey only. We understood it was a replica and again we were struck at its remarkable

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proportions. South of it we saw the beamless temple, 500 years old in an enclosure that is nearly circular and containing in these surroundings nothing but one vast stone tortoise. The beamless temple is remarkable for its vast vaulted roof and brick arches in a countryside where the Mings used wooden pillars, wooden crossbeams and their great curling eaves. But for us there are some Roman or romanesque structures resembling it a little. What purposes? What religion, what priesthood, no one about us knew. There it was, alone, austere, in perfect preservation. But a solitude, and perhaps to Chinese eyes, uncouth.

Then we sped westward through the woods until suddenly (having been told that we were nearing the tomb of the first Ming emperor, about A.D. 1368) we came upon stone statues in series, facing one another in an avenue, pair after pair. There were statues of human beings, counsellors or warriors. But then came a pair of camels, couched. Then a pair of camels standing. And horses, lions, elephants, and other beasts (some of them, it seemed, fabulous). From there we were driven to the guest house in a compound, formerly the domain of the embassy of one of the great powers. There we stayed for part of the afternoon. Then a reception and banquet in the evening was followed by entertainment, scenes from classical opera and dancers and jugglers.

Saturday, October 13, 1956. Chinese Astronomy

I had asked the previous day if we might visit the Observatory which I had noticed on the lesser peak of Purple-Gold Mountain. A winding road which gave us good opportunity of seeing first Nanking with its great wall, with its park and lakes just outside the wall (though there seemed to be many green spaces inside); and then the stretch of the Yangtze itself, until we got to the top. We met the members of the staff in this recently-built Observatory where since 1949 there have been extensive developments. It had been much damaged, but with the help of experts from the German Democratic Republic had been reconstructed. It was on a small scale, their biggest telescope a 24-inch. They observe the solar system, sunspots, eclipses and do work on time and calendars. They told of the new observatories to be set up under the second Five-Year Plan in half a dozen parts of China. They hoped in the future to do radio-astronomy, planetary astronomy and work on longitudes. There was some exchange with the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and the U.K. which

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they hoped to develop. In the grounds were astrolabes and other medieval instruments. Amongst them was an astrolabe of the Han dynasty, about A.D. 156 which had been reconstructed (or constructed according to the old Han recipe) in 1437. It had been looted in 1900 and removed to Berlin, whence it was restored after the First World War. Is there a clause about it in the Treaty of Versailles, I wonder? Secondly, there was a remarkable instrument for measuring latitude and longitude, invented in 1270 and constructed in 1437 under the Ming dynasty. The French forces took it to Paris after the Boxer rising as loot. At a later date it was restored. I asked about the observation by Chinese astronomers in A.D. 1054 of the super-nova in the Crab nebula. An astronomer present knew about this from the records but could not tell me where the observation was made, except that it was probably in one of the towns in the valley of the Hwang-ho. The astrolabe that we saw was most curiously fashioned, and was supported by four intricately carved bronze dragons on tortoise bases. I remembered that Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a *Treatise on the Astrolabe* but as nigh fifty years have passed since I read it, it was no help to me: I would never work that astrolabe. But the work of the Chinese star-watchers of 900 years ago definitely helped our radio-astronomers at Jodrell Bank less than nine years ago.

As we came down from the Observatory we once more had the remarkable view of the Yangtze valley and then found ourselves on the lake without the city wall, or rather on one of its causeways. Pavilions rush at us asking us to be seated and to shelter from the sun: and once set within a pavilion, cups of tea and fruit made for us at speed. The cups had lids on them and the tea was in the bottom of the cup so that the unfolding leaves rose to the surface as the boiling water was poured in. This is Tsing-chai, or Ching-char.

From there we went to the former headquarters of Chiang Kai-shek, now the seat of the Provincial Government. Three children attached themselves to us in the garden of this house, led us across the bridge over the inevitable stream, or fish pond: the boy instructing the two girls to 'take care of uncle on those steps', and finally agreed to sing for us at the request of one of their elders. They could be, I suppose, about 8 or 9 years of age. All one can do is to say: 'Your children are wonderful.'

R. PAGE ARNOT.

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LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM

STUNG *by the woman engineer who was applying for a male labourer's job, some readers take her to task. Others range from who should pay the salary of the Leader of the Opposition to the case of the Japanese woman shot by a U.S. soldier. Last day for August (short letters, please): Monday, July 8, to:—*

THE EDITOR, LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM,
134, Ballards Lane,
London, N.3.

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Why call it 'Women's Work'?

Mrs. Silk should know better! Why even speak of 'women's work'? It is nothing but an employer's term. 'Work' is what Capital buys 'hands' by the week to do for him; the source of his profit, which he pockets and thus accumulates until he can exploit yet more 'hands' with it. See how true it is, that Profit is the Work of the Capitalist's 'own' hands! How clear it is that the interests of Capital and 'his' Labour are identical! How right that Capital should be entitled to a reward for his 'own' Labour! (The only slight flaw is that 'his' Labour doesn't get it.)

Now, Mrs. Silk, does it matter to you whether your employer is a man or a woman? Do you think it matters to your employer whether his 'hands' are male or female? Those famous hands can be men's, women's or children's. They can be black, brown, yellow or white. They can be muscular and horny, or soft and ink-stained. They can be skilled or unskilled, highly paid or poorly paid. What is common to the lot is that Capital wouldn't—and couldn't—employ them for a moment if they were not providing *him* with a profit, and a profit of a size not too far off the average. So Mrs. Silk equally with the Brothers she appeals to can forget about 'women's work' and turn their minds to the exploitation by Capital of Labour, of whatever kind, sex or colour.

Having scrubbed that off the board, let us take a look at the Women's National Schedule in engineering. It was instituted over 25 years ago—by the engineering employers: all right, by Capital in Engineering, to sound less personal. It was one move in the long process of breaking down the job—and at the same time, with luck, breaking down the cherished skills and the craftsmen who exercise them. The Relaxation Agreement (about which many of us had prolonged qualms) facilitated and accelerated the process during the last war. Not only of course with regard to the Women's Schedule; not all the men dilutees of those days have yet faded away. Plenty of long-service ex-Forces men have made their entry, who never served their time in the traditional way, with all its safeguards and class loyalty. But there still remains a hard core of the best of British Labour, capable of restricting a few of the dirtier practices

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of British Capital.

Perhaps I am talking old-fashioned? The New Thinkers recognise that things have changed ever so, since I was a boy. That in these days of the salaried Industrial Psychologist Consultant (a worker too, just like me!) the manager himself is a man, if not a Brother. But excuse me; let me mind my manners from now on. Back to the Women's Schedule.

In the main sections of the industry, women 'hands' make up nearly a quarter of the whole labour force. In some sections—very paying sections, too—the proportion is far higher. Chivalrous Uncle Capital! How kind to arrange his works to give employment to female hands! After all, they can't be much good, can they? Not skilled? Terrors for absenteeism? Admittedly never capable of becoming tradeswomen? And yet kind uncle employs them! Shouldn't he be warned that his benevolence may ruin him yet?

British engineering has some colossal problems—besides the central one of getting rid of Uncle Capital altogether. He has put us in a mess already; he will leave us in one. Why not make a start on tackling some of the problems, and learning as we go? Why not, for example, make a start by abolishing the Women's National Schedule altogether—and just watch the faces of the employers in electrical engineering! I would wager a modest bet that they would start thinking about conceding the male labourer's rate. And the next step could start from there; with all the drive, and all the unity of men and women, craftsmen, semi-skilled and labourers, which the situation demands.

A. M. RICHARDS,
Staffs.

Then Speak Up, Sisters!

Really, Sister Silk! do you imagine that the rest of us engineers enjoyed waiting for this hand-picked Court of Inquiry to decide on our standard of living? But of course we in the Amalgamated Engineering Union must shoulder our responsibilities for the leaders we inflict on the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the reactionary policy which led to capitulation to the Tory Government and the Bosses.

But what of your position, semi-skilled yet well below the male labourer rate? You, if you're an A.E.U. member, and the thousands of other women members have accepted, since your admission to membership, being only second or third class members: that is, non-admittance to any section except Women and Girls; no right to vote as women delegates to the national committee.

Any branch president will confirm that the number of women attending meetings is infinitesimal. If you fail to make your voices heard where the policy-making starts can you be surprised that we Brothers begin to believe that you have little interest in your own welfare? Now, before you start shouting about household chores and the meetings not being interesting, let me remind you that many of your number are single and could spare the time to attend and help with the routine jobs. That would impress us with your desire to advance the fight for the male labourer's rate, which is only the beginning of the struggle for women to be recognised as equals in our trade.

I can understand your feelings seeing others earn more for a less skilled job. Many setters, tool-makers, etc., have wondered from time to

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time whether it is worth spending those years learning the trade, when semi-skilled operators take home a heavier wage packet. That is one of the anomalies of the system. But they have continued the struggle.

Don't take my words too hard. We branch officers and shop stewards are fighting with you; but please, Sisters, come and do your talking where it will have most effect, at shop and branch meetings.

A. SAUNDERS,
Middlesex.

The Teacher from Hiroshima

As my eldest son entered his 'teens, I became rather disturbed at the approach of Call-up age. How would he like life in the Forces? Two wasted years! Away from home; and, as he has a terrific appetite, maybe not enough food to eat? So believe me, I was very much against Call-up, especially as I had seen the sorrow it caused a neighbour who lost an only son of 19 killed in Cyprus. And I still see the girl he left behind very unhappy. Now, my son was born in 1941 so he will not now be called up. But I would have him and all other lads serve their time if it *would* mean the end of H-bomb tests and threatened nuclear warfare—as Macmillan has the gall to suggest.

I shall never forget the Japanese school-teacher from Hiroshima who told us that after the explosion she saw people walking around dazed, with what she thought was their clothes flowing like streamers. Taking a closer look she saw it was their skin. Am I and other mothers to live in fear of the effects this terrible thing will have on our children and their children? Every time my two youngest children have a glass of milk I think of Strontium 90. These war-crazy people who are planning nuclear warfare outdo each other with terrific skill in thinking up new horrors for us, and ways for us to be killed.

We must fight to have these tests stopped at once, to ensure the future of life. We must fight in the same way that trade unionism did and from which we now reap the benefits.

MIRIAM CARTER,
Dagenham.

U.S. Sentry on Trial

This case of the U.S. serviceman shooting a Japanese woman on a military base firing range has some extraordinary features, although it has taken so long to reach the world press. It happened as long ago as January 30 and it caused an outcry throughout Japan, at once. An account in the organ of the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan at the time shows why. Six people had already been killed and a number injured before Mrs. Naka Sakai, the 46-year-old wife of an impoverished farmer, was shot dead on the Somagahara U.S. military base. First, why were Japanese people risking their lives on the rifle range? Simply through poverty. Before the war this was farmland of a peaceful village. Commandeered by the Japanese militarists in 'the service of the Emperor and the State', some 6,000 precious acres of arable land were taken over by the occupying troops after the war and used ever since as a military base, presumably demonstrating the values of the western way of life. The impoverished villagers are reduced to eking out the barest living by picking up bullets and empty cartridge cases to sell as scrap. Witnesses allege that the accused deliberately encouraged the woman to pick up cart-

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ridges on the range during the mid-day break, and then took pot shots, the second of which killed her. But to-day the peoples of the East are standing up. The trade unions and Socialist Party sent a committee to investigate immediately, and within three weeks there had been a demonstration and angry demands for a trial of the offender. The peoples of the West should stand up too; and demand that *all* troops be withdrawn to their mother country. In short, bring all the lads home before the world reaps an iron harvest.

R. DIXON,
Bradford.

'I Wish, I Wish . . .'

On the 36th Anniversary of the founding of *Labour Monthly,* here are three birthday wishes, which I should like to see come true before July 1, 1958: 1. China admitted to the U.N.; or rather, China's proper representative at last arriving on the scene. (Long overdue, but perhaps not so far off?) 2. The Mongolian People's Republic also admitted; for it seems high time that the Old World (now so new) was brought in to redress the balance of the New World (now so old). 3. That the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition should be paid out of Party funds in future—if the nature of the work merits extra pay—instead of getting his £2,000 out of the consolidated fund, like one of Her Majesty's judges. These are modest wishes, but heartfelt.

'SOCIALIST SAILOR,'
Portsmouth.

Putting it briefly . . .

The bomb will be destroyed by the people, I remember you quoting some time ago in L.M. But who said that? It begins now to look almost as though we could make it come true.—*J.W., Birmingham.*

(*We have quoted this more than once. The first time was in the 'Notes of the Month', July, 1951: 'The birth of the atom bomb marks the beginning of the end of the American imperialists. For they based their calculations on the bomb and not on the people. In the end of ends, it is not the bomb that will destroy the people, but the people who will destroy the bomb.' The speaker was Mao Tse-tung.*)

These by-elections have a simple lesson to teach. The Tory Government has lost the confidence of its supporters, but the Labour Opposition has not won the enthusiasm of theirs. For on a low poll the Tories lost 25,000 votes in two of their 'safe seats' and one Labour stronghold. But Labour dropped a net 6,500. Yet the two issues were the H-Bomb and the Rent Bill. How can the Labour Party expect to stir the electorate to go all out for socialism, if it is content merely to score through the Tory voter being browned off?—*H.T., Hornsey.*

With the Rent Act now law, how many engineers realise that their eleven shillings rise will have gone up the spout in rent increases by October? It is to the private landlords and their Tory Government that the famous strings ought to be attached. Action to block the operation of this Act should be taken in every trade union branch now, before the holidays begin. Time will be short afterwards.—*L.H., Sussex.*

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As an International Brigader I was very much interested to see mention in the Fund List of Herman Boetcher. He was in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, I believe. Can you tell me what campaign in the Pacific he was engaged in?.—*L.E., Clapham.*

(*An American correspondent tells us that 'Captain Herman Boetcher, U.S. Army, wrote a letter to my union from Spain. Later he was in command at Buena Vista Corner, which time proved to be the El Alamein of the Pacific War.'*)

It's a cruel insult to womanhood, the possibility of having to bear monstrosities to further the ambitions of knaves and fools. Many women are really worried, but 'What can I do about it?' is the prevailing attitude. So I thought the H-Bomb Special Number of L.M. very good. All the best. We mustn't despair.—*C.C., Dorset.*

Pure Scientists

(*A reader in Leeds writes: 'By chance I found in a German weekly these verses by Gerd Semmer. There it was entitled* ATOM POEM 57, *and it includes a quotation from Berthold Brecht. I could not resist putting it into English.*')

Eighteen Professors have broken through
the raging silence of the sound insulating wall
built by the bought Press
round the plan of mass murder.
But gentlemen, what concern of yours is this?
Do you think you simply can butt in here?
That actually is politics, of which you know nothing!
Neither have you been asked about it!
No discussion! Move on!

For generations they washed their hands in pure science.
The consequences they never have wanted. At last,
eighteen opened their mouth, men showed their heart.
But gentlemen, what concern of yours are the consequences?
You really think you simply can butt in?
Get on with your work, of which you understand something!
Don't you have any professional ethics?
And besides, nobody has ever asked you!
No discussion! Move on!

'Clutching their children the mothers stand and
trembling scan the sky
for the inventions of the scientists.'
But gentlemen, what concern of yours are the children?
You really think one simply can butt in here?
Leave this to the experts!
Shooting has started!
No discussion! Disperse!

(From *Wochenzeitung*, May, 1957.)

★

(This month the prize of ONE GUINEA *has not been awarded.)*

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COPPARD AND OTHERS

The Twenties, by John Montgomery. (336 pp. Allen & Unwin. *25s.*)
It's me, O Lord! by A. E. Coppard. (252 pp. Methuen, *22s. 6d.*)
Verge of Glory, by Frederick Wright. (318 pp. W. H. Allen. *15s.*)

THE outstanding features of the nineteen-twenties, which made that decade unique in the literary history of the twentieth century, were the relief felt by the young at being alive and the sense of mental liberation enjoyed by the intelligentsia. Young people felt that they not only had restored to them normal expectation of life but that they were free to think what they liked and say and write what they pleased. The effect of this on the current literary output was immediate. Genius, in the person of D. H. Lawrence, found full expression, while distinguished talents such as those of Aldous Huxley, Wyndham Lewis, Norman Douglas and A. E. Coppard flourished uninhibited. It was characteristic of the decade that undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge even felt at liberty to flirt with Communism. Subsequent conversion to the faith of the late Senator McCarthy has not in all cases purged these daring characters of suspicion, at least in the United States, as Mr. Graham Greene recently discovered.

Among the liberated literary figures of the twenties, the late A. E. Coppard, whose autobiography *It's me, O Lord!* has recently appeared, occupied a respected place. His first collection of short stories *Adam and Eve and Pinch me* was published in 1923 and was followed by Collected Poems (after some intervening volumes) five years later. In his autobiography Coppard tells us how he was brought up in circumstances of extreme poverty and left school at nine. His early struggles, however, neither soured his natural gaiety, nor prevented him achieving a distinguished prose style, though they did make him a Socialist. His book, though it contains a lively account of how he won 'culture' is carefully expurgated as regards politics. This is a pity as his last effort was the launching of the Authors' Peace World Appeal in 1951. Owing to the activities of a literary lady associated with Right-wing Labour, he felt forced to resign within a year, and the story of how it happened would have had more than topical interest. On the other hand, the publishers would probably not have printed it, so no doubt he took the wiser course.

Equally careful of Right-wing susceptibilities has been Mr. John Montgomery whose book *The Twenties* avoids controversial topics and modifies history to conform with modern publishing requirements. It is doubtful if the author was alive during the period he describes, but his study of available material has been cleverly done and will awaken nostalgic memories in readers now of middle age. The comparative strength of sterling, he writes, made visits to countries like France and Italy an economy, after World War I.

In Paris, the painter Amedeo Modigliani, who hastened his end by drink and drugs, inaugurated the unparalleled success, as a Bohemian tourist resort, of Montparnasse. Modigliani died in January, 1920, and his funeral set going its invasion by American refugees from the Volstead Act which continued during the decade. His story has now been told in an American 'fictionalised' biography, *Verge of Glory* which must surely be the dullest of its kind. The portraits of Modi and his mistresses are travesties which emphasise the

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difficulty which modern Americans have in trying to understand the minds of Europeans. According to this author it is 'Europeans' who have a feeling that 'women are cannon fodder'. We are told that Modi's 'unkempt whiff excited her' —his agent's wife—'unmercifully suggesting to her that he was once more without a woman'. There are over 300 pages of this turgid claptrap which are as difficult to read as they are vulgarly misleading about the artist they purport to reveal.

GEORGE WILLOUGHBY.

A MARXIST CLASSIC

The Holy Family, by K. Marx and F. Engels. (300 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *7s. 6d.*)

IN his preface in 1873 to the second edition of *Capital*, Karl Marx says: 'The mystifying side of Hegelian dialectic I criticised nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still in fashion.' This criticism was made above all in *The Holy Family*, the first joint work of Marx and Engels, published in 1844. The special interest of this work is that it marks the development of their thought from criticism of Hegelian philosophy towards the first formulation of the principles of dialectical materialism and scientific socialism. The English translation, therefore, helps to fill a long-existing gap in our knowledge of Marx's writings. The whole of it is written in a highly polemical form, being a detailed answer to the so-called critical criticism of the Neo-Hegelians, Bruno Bauer and others. Hence much of it is filled with specialised philosophical controversy that is almost incomprehensible out of its context. But it contains many valuable passages expressing many of the basic ideas of Marxism. One cannot fail to be struck, for instance, by Marx's brilliant description how speculative idealism first reduces the real world to abstract categories and then explains real objects as mysterious incarnations of these abstractions, or his pithy analysis of the development of French materialism showing that communism is the logical conclusion of materialist philosophy. Of great interest, too, are the passages on political economy, such as those in which Engels describes the historic role of the proletariat, which 'can be victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite'.

It is a pity that the translation leaves much to be desired. Careless proof-reading, e.g., 'of' for 'or' (p. 177), 'contracts' for 'contrasts' (p. 85), 'like' for 'life' (p. 220), makes the sentences concerned unintelligible. Constructions occur which are completely un-English, e.g., 'he feels that he is being abused of for a farce', 'avenge me of the assassin' (p. 273). Words are inserted which are not in the German and distort the sense, or important qualifying words omitted, and in general the philosophical language is often made more difficult to follow by the bad choice of words and the clumsy way in which it has been translated. Thus 'moral 'is used as a noun when 'morality' is meant, 'infinitive' is used as an adjective for 'infinite' (e.g., 'infinitive pity'), and German words like *Expectorationen* are given nonsensical literal equivalents. On the title page the sub-title of the whole work is rendered 'Critique of Critical Critique', although throughout the text the words 'Critical Criticism' are used. Even some proper names are given incorrectly, e.g., Origenes for Origen, Bohme for Boehme, Leibnitz for Leibniz. A Marxist classic demands a higher standard of scholarship than this.

CLEMENS DUTT.

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A YANKEE AT THE COURT OF KING GHANA

Black Power, by Richard Wright. (358 pp. Dennis Dobson. *25s.*)

MR. WRIGHT, American ex-Communist and expatriate (he now lives in Paris), author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son,* visited the Gold Coast before it became Ghana. His journey is partly in self-search—to see how he reacts in the probable home of his ancestors—mainly as a sociologist, to find out how modern Africa really ticks. He has brought back a book of some value for those of us who are interested in colonial questions (and that *ought* to mean all in this country and especially all in the working-class movement). Too often when we think about the imperial-colonial relation we do so in terms of disembodied stereotypes so generalised as to have become totally unreal. We concretise in our imaginations the persons of the drama by guessing how we would feel, or those we know, were we called on to play similar roles. Even when we travel, or make the acquaintance of individuals from the colonies in our own land, these theoretical images tend to intervene between us and our perception of reality. Mr. Wright's report is a corrective to this tendency. He fills in the canvas with all the richness of its real complexity and variegated colours. This is not because the author is dully objective. On the contrary, he is fascinatingly Yankee. He himself says that, despite nostalgia for the Gold Coast, he could never look on himself as in any way 'African', in any sense that could justify racialist theories of culture, and his book infallibly proves his point. There has never been a more typical American tourist, with every prejudice and propensity, since Mark Twain's 'Innocents Abroad'. He carries with him everywhere his twin gods of Hygiene and Psychiatry and his hobby-horse of anti-communism, he talks to people only to tell them their own business, he is convinced that he can understand everything and explain everything, and his mania for generalisation is such that he cannot report a conversation faithfully without interrupting it every few lines to interpret what his interlocutor really means. Nevertheless, this "satiable curiosity' and invincible Yankee confidence stands us in good stead. He is determined to see all and discuss with everyone. If his notions sometimes seem *naif,* or at least unreliable—he is ready to leap across the gulf between an insecure premise and a firm conclusion at the slightest provocation—at others they seem fertile, percipient and sensitive. The weakest aspect of the book is its lack of current background. He is primed well on the dreadful history of imperial aggression, but to Mr. Wright—another Yankee trait this—the English are all one unspeakable, diabolical lump and he is curiously unconcerned about the interplay of forces that compelled the administration to change their exclusive reliance on indirect rule for at least an acceptance of Ghana.

IVOR MONTAGU.

U.S. TRADE UNIONS

A.F.L.-C.I.O., Labour United, by A. J. Goldberg. (320 pp., McGraw-Hill. *37s. 6d.*)

THIS book contains the major documents connected with the merger of the American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organisations, the two giants of United States trade-unionism, into one united trade union federation. Of some value are the chapters outlining the progress of the unity negotiations and the problems that each side con-

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fronted. That section of the book that presumes to outline the history of the American labour movement is barren of value, completely omitting the major historic struggles of the early years. The chapter of the rise and growth of the C.I.O. limits itself to the mere recording of the formal differences within the A.F.L. in 1935. The great historical significance and consequences of organising nearly six million workers in the nation's basic industries into militant industrial unions—with the sit-down strikes, the absence of discrimination based on political affiliation and colour, and the development of forms of independent labour political action within the Roosevelt coalition —is completely missing.

The entire book is an apology for an exposition of the established class-collaboration policies of the top trade union bureaucracy, by someone outside the labour movement. His only relationship to labour was as attorney for the United Steel Workers Union and the C.I.O. after the expulsion of Left-led trade unions. His philosophy is expounded in a lengthy introduction where he states that American unionism 'ceased to be impressed by the achievements of the older Socialist-oriented unions of Europe' when it was able to achieve high wages and improved working conditions 'through its own bargaining power . . . and social legislation enacted through the working of our traditional two-party system'. He declares 'a labour party has no appeal to American unions . . . they abhor Communism (and) look upon Socialism as neither practicable nor desirable for the U.S.' He unhesitatingly endorses the rejection of the class struggle while projecting the class collaborationist theory of the 'mutual trusteeship' between management and labour; and writes approvingly that 'The A.F.L. and C.I.O. were completely united in support of the principal programmes of America's post-war foreign policy....'

The real significance of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. merger and its consequences has yet to appear in book form.

J.W.

SUEZ PLOT

Les Secrets de l'expedition d'Egypte, by Merry and Serge Bromberger. (270 pp. Edition Les Quatre Fils Aymon, 39 Rue Vaneau, Paris, VII., Frs. 795.)

THIS book has achieved a certain fame, and rendered certain service, by letting cats out of bags in relation to collaboration between the governments of France and Israel in connection with the Suez war. There, its use and merits end. It is not a good book. It is no more than sensational journalism, a series of articles rather than a book, extravagant and unconvincing in form and in substance. It is fantastically anti-civilian and politician, and pro-military, being plainly inspired and briefed by the French General Staff. It will have, in the end, a little historical value as a picture of the decadence of the last stages of imperialism. And it has perhaps some immediate value in throwing light on the general incompetence of 'brass-hats'.

D. N. PRITT.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

capitalist enterprise to monopolise the means of influencing public opinion in the age first of manhood suffrage and ultimately of adult suffrage . . . making it into an instrument to dope and deceive the masses of the people'. Despite radio and T.V. it is still by far the most powerful means of influencing public opinion. With it Mammoth seeks to persuade Man that their interests are alike; that when not piling up Mammoth's millions he has only to eat, drink and be merry. Recently *The Times* declaring that 'Irresponsibility is rife', deplored 'the turning of the press into predominantly a business enterprise'. As Marx said over a hundred years ago: 'The first freedom of the Press consists in it not being a business'. The final end for this monopoly will be the same as for others. It will be taken into social ownership; then at last the struggle for the freedom of the press can be won.

Meanwhile, whatever the difficulties, there will always remain 'the other Press', independent of monopolists and advertisers, which has never appealed for support in vain to the British popular movement. For such journals new readers are won, not by a high-pressure sales campaign, but by its own readers. And only the readers themselves bridge the gap between costs and revenue by their donations. Amongst such journals, *Labour Monthly*, entering this month its thirty-seventh year of continuous service, has its own place.

A brief word of thanks to those who have sent birthday wishes. To the angry Scot, disgusted by the B.B.C.'s red-baiting propaganda, thinly disguised as entertainment, and its affront to truth and freedom. To the champion literature seller who has reproof for those who miss opportunities to sell *Labour Monthly* in factory and at meetings (and he gives chapter and verse). To those who seized on the June Special Number to introduce our magazine into new circles. I have no room to mention all those who wrote in praise of the June H-Bomb number ('A corker, especially Montagu's article'—*Edinburgh*. A splendid H-Bomb number. As one who watched a beloved wife slowly die of cancer, my anger against this devilish foolery is personal as well as political.'—*Nottingham*.) Nor to answer some enquiries about the fund and supporters. May total was:

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